3 Experience Coding and Linguistic Variation

James Paul Gee

Uncorrected proof

In this chapter I am going to use the term 'experience coding.' I want to use this term in a quite specific way (and unrelated to the term 'experiential coding' as it is sometimes used in qualitative research methods classes and as an approach to advertising). I am not talking here about codes for research, but coding in the sense of assigning meanings to symbols, as in Morse code. In particular, I want to talk about 'codes' in terms of my interpretation of how Basil Bernstein meant (or should have meant) the term (though he was not always clear about this). I am not concerned whether I am right or wrong about Bernstein. Either way, I am using him for my own ends here.

This chapter is about a key source of linguistic variation, one I will call 'social languages.' Social languages are a form of 'experience coding.' Such coding is centered on how people use their social knowledge and experiences to communicate as a certain 'type of person.' Social languages are, thus, something like a Morse code for socially meaningful identities.

Experiential coding is about meaning first and foremost. Linguistic structure ('grammar') enters the scene here as a tool for this coding, but a tool that serves many other purposes as well. This renders the relationship between experiential coding and grammar complicated and an issue that needs great care if we are not to replicate linguistic prejudices (and it is this issue that got Bernstein in trouble – see below).

Whenever we speak, we have to speak 'as someone' (Gee, 1990, 1999, 2017). If a doctor says to her patient (who happens also to be a friend of hers), 'I am telling you this as your friend, not as your doctor,' she is making clear 'where she is speaking from,' from which 'social position' or 'socially-situated identity.' Of course, the patient has the option of responding by speaking 'as a friend' or 'as a patient,' with different social effects in each case.

What does it mean to speak 'as someone' (to speak 'as a friend' or 'as a doctor')? It means that we draw on experiences and relationships on the basis of which we can (be accepted as having the 'right' to) make certain sorts of claims. When someone talks to you 'as a friend,' they draw on

personal experiences they have had with you and other connected friends or family. When they talk to you 'as a doctor,' they draw on experiences they have had with doctors and patients in the institution of medicine.

Whenever we speak, we also address the other 'as someone.' The doctor above is addressing the patient as a friend, not as a patient. If the patient accepts the doctor's attempt to speak 'as a friend' and speaks back as a friend, then we have what I will call 'symmetrical coding.' Each party to the talk is speaking and responding within the same realm of experience (here friendship experiences).

Now, say the doctor speaks as a doctor, not a friend, to someone who is, in fact, also her friend – perhaps she even says, 'I am telling you this as your doctor, not your friend.' If the patient speaks back by the norms of being/speaking as a patient in a doctor–patient interaction, the interaction is again an example of symmetrical coding. Each party is speaking and responding within the same realm of experience (here institutional medical care experiences).

If the doctor attempts to speak 'as a friend' and the patient refuses to speak back that way and speaks back as a patient in a doctor–patient relationship, or if the doctor attempts to speak 'as a doctor' and the patient responds as a personal friend of the doctor, the interaction is an example of non-symmetrical coding. Each is speaking on the basis of different realms of experience.

People can speak out of a great many different identities tied to different realms of experience (Hacking, 1986, 2006). However, if we stay at a very high level of abstraction, we can distinguish five major social identities (Table 3.1), each connected to a distinctive realm of experiences and relationships in the world (Gee, 2004, 2017):

- *Familiar (Personal, Individual) Identity*: Here we speak based on – with reference to – shared personal experience within social circles like families and friends and people we see (or seek to treat) as close to us. What counts as friends and family and how we treat each other varies across social and cultural groups.

Table 3.1 Regulatory regimes

Identities	Regulatory regimes
Familiar:	Norms, values and personal knowledge shared with those with whom one feels or wants to express close social distance, such as family and friends.
Public:	Norms, values and personal knowledge shared with some public.
Authorized Expert:	'Officially' sanctioned norms, values and knowledge.
Participatory Specialist:	Norms, values and knowledge sanctioned by participation and emergent norms stemming from that participation.
Institutional:	Norms, values and knowledge of 'official' and tacit rules and regulations and roles supposed to be known to all the people who interact in or with the institution.

Uncorrected Proof

- *Public Identity*: Here we speak based on – with reference to – shared experience within social public circles and spaces that include more than friends and family. We speak not as experts or specialists of any sort, but as 'everyday people.' There are a great many 'publics,' small and large, such as fellow Americans, fellow African Americans, fellow Catholics, or fellow townspeople, and many others.
- *Authorized Expert Identity*: Here we speak based on – with reference to – shared experience and special knowledge within social circles and spaces that include fellow 'credentialed' experts. There are many sorts of authorized experts such as doctors, lawyers, physicists, certified contractors, and so on.
- *Participatory Specialist Identity*: Here we speak based on – with reference to – shared experience and special knowledge within social circles and spaces that include people with whom we share a special activity and its associated skills and knowledge and where people earn 'authority' by participation and achievements and not official credentials. There are also a great many groups ('interest-driven groups') of participatory specialists, such as anime aficionados, avid gamers, activists of all sorts, citizen scientists, and many others.
- *Institutional Identity*: Here we speak based on – with reference to – our roles, rights, and responsibilities as defined by an institution. Of course, there are a good many institutions such as schools, hospitals, government offices, and so on.

Each of these large realms of experience is governed or regulated by certain norms, values and types of knowledge rooted in social conventions about how people in a society can enact and recognize different socially-situated identities. We will call these norms, values and types of knowledge 'regulatory regimes' (Bernstein, 2000), though without the negative connotations that term seemed to have for Bernstein. Regulatory regimes can serve good or bad purposes in different situations.

Experience Coding

When people speak 'as someone' I will say they are engaged in the process of 'experience coding.' So, what is 'experience coding'? To understand the notion of such coding, imagine that you are a secret agent and want to code a message so that outsiders cannot read it. To create the code, you have to consider what you and the receiver mutually know and use this awareness to help you set up the code. If the code is going to a friend, you can trade on familiar and personal knowledge. If it is going to a stranger, you cannot trade on that knowledge but will use shared public knowledge (for some public), such as what every American knows. If it is going to a fellow authorized expert or participatory

Uncorrected Proof

specialist, you can trade on shared specialist knowledge (such as physics or gaming).

For example, if I was constructing a secret code for only my wife to read, I could trade on such knowledge as 'the name of a pet mouse who likes to hide things' (Mandy). Perhaps, part of my code would say 'Mandy the money' (for 'Hide the money'). On the other hand, I cannot use that shared knowledge with a fellow gamer, but I could trade on our shared knowledge about what boss battles are, to say of an encounter I am soon to have in the real world: 'Wish me luck, I am about to face the final boss battle in my academic career.'

An experience code in language-in-use formulates information with reference to a shared base of knowledge based on certain sorts of experiences. Like a spy code, it automatically creates insiders (people 'in the know') and outsiders. Coding is a way of relating words and experience via assessments of knowledge and experience as they are distributed in society. All language in use is, of course, coded to specific contexts we are in (e.g. 'The coffee spilled, go get a broom' is coded to a context where coffee grains or beans have spilled, not liquid coffee). But experience coding is coded with reference to *assumptions about shared knowledge stemming from experiences connected to different social realms, not just specific contexts*.

Experiential Identities Colliding

There are many situations in any pluralistic and complex society where experiential identities collide because of non-symmetrical coding. If a person who knows little about games asks me a technical question about gaming, I have to speak as a gamer (using my specialist gamer experience), but to someone who is not a gamer. I will have to simplify ('pidginize') 'gamer talk,' but I will also have to elaborate more, since I cannot take shared knowledge for granted. My interlocutor will speak to me as a public person based on shared public knowledge (or even prejudices) about games and gaming. Note the non-symmetrical match-up then between identity and experience here: participatory specialist (gamer) talking to member of (some shared) non-gamer public.

Imagine a white interviewer asking an African American whether she thinks racism is still a severe problem in the United States. The African American can choose to talk 'from first-hand experience' (familiar identity) and use examples drawn from experiences she, her friends and her family have had (personal knowledge). Or, she could use examples that all African Americans tend to know about (public knowledge where the public here is African Americans). Or she can choose to use examples and arguments drawn from a larger public that she and the white person share (e.g. fellow Americans). She has, among others (e.g. African

Uncorrected Proof

American young woman), three different experiential bases from which to speak.

When the African American talks to the white interviewer in terms of public knowledge that black and white Americans share, we have symmetrical coding. But when she talks out of her personal or public African American identity, we have non-symmetrical coding, since the white interviewer can only respond in a wider shared public identity like 'fellow American.'

The sorts of interactions we have been discussing here can, of course, get quite sensitive in the United States. The confluences and conflicts of different publics and different experiential bases can become quite vexed. And, I should point out, though it needs a paper of its own, identity for humans happens in reality at the level of kinds – so not at the larger level of African Americans or gamers, but at the level of different kinds of African Americans or kinds of gamers.

One of the more studied examples of experience-coding dilemmas concerns children in school (Gee, 1990, 2004) who respond to a teacher as an everyday person or even as a 'friend' but receive a response back with an institutional identity enforcing rules and regulations ('teacher'). Indeed, schools are vexed in terms of identities and coding. A teacher might be a member of a local community and thus able to interact with the children either as a member of a shared restricted public (say, local community-based African Americans) or as an institutional actor (a 'teacher' in a 'school'). Since local communities can sometimes get small and tightly-knit enough to function as extended 'friends,' in some cases and situations the teacher is able to interact with the children – or some of them – as a friend or courtesy relative. In each case she draws on different experiential bases and their associated knowledge norms and the child has to figure out how to respond.

I want now to give an extended real example of this school dilemma, but first I want to introduce the notion of the 'lifeworld' (Habermas, 1984). A person's lifeworld is composed of all those situations in which he or she communicates as an 'everyday person,' not as an expert, specialist, or institutional actor of any sort. The lifeworld is, thus, composed of our familiar (personal) and public identities and experiences. It is the realm of 'common sense.' People from different social and cultural groups have different conceptions of, and norms, beliefs and practices in, their lifeworld, but there is usually enough overlap that they can deal with each other in a society as 'everyday people' (barring prejudices of various sorts).

Let me now turn to my example from public schooling (Gee, 2017). A third-grade teacher is working with a small group of children on a guided reading lesson. As part of the lesson, she has the children do a 'picture walk.' The children look at just the pictures and book, and they make predictions about what the book will be about and say.

Uncorrected Proof

One little girl (who happened to be African American) is bouncing in her chair, showing manifest excitement and volunteers enthusiastically each turn. The teacher eventually told her to calm down. The girl said, 'I'm sorry, but I'm *so* happy.' The teacher responded, 'Well, just calm down.' As a visitor in the classroom, and a linguist who came to education late, I was surprised by the teacher's response to the girl's saying, 'I'm sorry, but I'm *so* happy.' In the lifeworld of this teacher and student, if someone says 'I'm *so* happy,' the polite thing to do is to ask them why.

This teacher was well respected in the school and neither she nor the children appeared to see anything odd going on. The teacher was more focused on teaching students to follow guidelines and remain well-ordered than she was on the content of the lesson alone (Bernstein, 2000). Here she clearly subordinates lifeworld coding to institutional coding.

In institutions, routines and regulations can become rigidified and taken for granted. Routines help us function efficiently but they can sometimes become dysfunctional or even do harm. For example, perhaps responding to the girl's happiness could have helped build her emotional affiliation with the lesson, the teacher and schooling, and thus furthered her allegiance to the school as a public domain and its norms and values

By the way, what I have said thus far does not tell us whether the fact that the girl is African American is relevant or not. After much collection of data in this and other schools in the area, I came to see that many of the teachers operated with a taken-for-granted principle something like this: With young children, if 'you give them an inch, they'll take a mile.' They believed that if you let children get away with small things, the children would quickly escalate to lots of noise and disruption.

In the schools I was visiting at the time of the event described above, teachers often turned the lights out when children made noise, in order to get them to be quiet. I came to notice that it was very often one of the more ebullient kids in the class that caused the lights to go out. This makes sense. The teacher, thanks to the 'give them an inch, they'll take a mile' principle, is going to turn the lights off at the first sign of noise and, thus, the more ebullient children are likely to be the first to go over the line, however minor their noise-making may have been.

People from different cultural groups have different normal degrees of what we might call 'pitch' (a cultural difference in lifeworld styles). Some groups tend to show emotion and involvement more strongly – to be 'livelier' – than other groups. In these schools, which were in Wisconsin, the white children and teachers tended to be lower pitched than the African American children; indeed, they were lower pitched than whites in some other cultural groups (Kochman, 1981). So, in these schools, some of the African American children were a step ahead of the other children and went over the low-bar noise line just before

Uncorrected Proof

other children were about to cross it. Thus, they 'caused' the lights to go out more commonly, but not because they were particularly noisy or disruptive (indeed, the little girl we just discussed was quite enthusiastic about her academics), but rather because they were a bit higher-pitched than the white children. Unfortunately, the child who causes the lights to go out can come to be seen as a troublemaker, even if he or she is acting just a step ahead of other children in the class.

There is nothing inherently good or bad about a groups' pitch level (and not all members of a group behave the same). At the same time, there are some groups (defined by culture or class) whose pitch level is low enough that they can seem to others 'disinterested.' And there are some groups whose pitch level is high enough that they can seem to others 'excited.' There is a continuum here, not a binary distinction, but when the poles interact, interesting things – some of them unfortunate – can happen. Pitch level can vary even within groups that share aspects of a larger culture (e.g. Jewish people from a Western European background tend to be lower pitched than Jewish people from an Eastern European background, and people from some areas in Italy tend to be higher pitched than most white people from England (Tannen, 1984)).

When the teachers turn out the lights, they have long since ceased to reflect much on the matter and the assumptions behind it. It is just routine practice. So, it is easy to perceive the child – and whatever is salient about the child – to be the 'trouble,' not the practice and the assumptions behind the act of turning off the lights to gain quiet. If one realized that noise can be a sign of disruption or of learning – and we need to know which is which – the practice might well change. If one realized that people have different normal degrees of 'pitch,' the bar for lights-out might be raised.

There is a great need for people to know and reflect on the fact that people in a pluralist society come together as 'everyday people' in the lifeworld, but that cultural conceptions of the lifeworld and how to be and do in it can differ in ways that lead to misunderstanding. Even in the symmetrical coding of lifeworld (personal or public identities)-to-lifeworld communication, there can still be sources of asymmetry.

Specialist Worlds

When we talk as an expert or specialist of some sort, we have left the lifeworld for a specialist world. These are domains like physics, gaming, anime aficionados, medicine, cat fanciers, tech geeks and many others (each of a certain kind). The core function of communicating within a specialist identity (authorized or participatory) is to create and maintain special knowledge and expertise.

Specialist worlds overlay on the lifeworld a 'new order.' The lifeworld's core function of maintaining social relations (personal or

Uncorrected Proof

public) is subordinated to a 'higher-order' function in specialist worlds of establishing, maintaining and sharing expertise that allow 'public people' to form sub-societies of specialization that have their own rules and regulations. In the act, specialist worlds also re-align the language and interactional practices of the lifeworld, adding to them, adjusting them, and norming and assessing them in different ways, creating specialist coding.

Let me give an example of how specialist worlds can re-align, transform and even replace lifeworld language and practices (Gee, 2017). Below is a dialogue between two players (who call themselves 'Bead' and 'Allele,' actually my twin brother and myself) in the massive multiplayer game *World of Warcraft*. The dialogue was typed into a chat box:

Bead: Are you really dead?
Allele: Yes, did you get the heart?
Bead: I got the heart – another guy was helping.
Allele: Good.
Bead: I am standing over your body mourning.
Allele: I died for you.
Bead: So touching.
Allele: It's a long way back.
Bead: I know – I've done it.

Lifeworld coding gets its meaning from everyday personal and shared 'everyday' public experiences. While the interaction above looks like an everyday conversation (and follows many of its rules), the interaction gets its meaning from a 'special' world (realm of experience), the virtual world of *World of Warcraft*. A person has to be adept enough at the conventions germane to this special world and the experiences in it in order to engage in such dialogue. These conventions are 'owned and operated by' a group of 'specialists' (adept players) with deference to 'experts' (the game's designers and the players who set the norms for behavior, interaction, and knowledge in and of the game). No adept player would have written something like: 'Is your character out of play because you lost the battle?' instead of 'Are you dead?' And no adept player would write: 'Is your character dead?' instead of 'Are you dead?' where 'you' refers to the real person/avatar blend.

The interaction above is written in a language that, for those who do not know it, can seem odd indeed. This conversation is taking place after these two players have tried to accomplish a quest (goal). Having accomplished the goal that Allele was helping him to accomplish, Bead notices that Allele is not around anymore. Thus, he messages him to see if he died in the act of helping – and Allele, in turn, asks if Bead

Uncorrected proof

stayed alive and accomplished the goal (to get a heart out of a grave). The events the players have observed, partly together and partly separated, and are now discussing, have a narrative logic that is itself situated in games like this one, and not exactly like the narrative logic of everyday life.

Here is another example of language from *World of Warcraft* as a specialist world (Gee, 2017: xvii):

> Mitigation from armor class is the only non-linearly scaling stat (that is, each percent of mitigation granted by Armor Class requires more than the point before it).

This is a sentence from a theory crafting site where *World of Warcraft* players analyze the underlying statistics and rules of the game in order to better understand the game and enhance their strategies and play. This language, too, gains its meaning not from everyday lifeworld experience but from a 'special world' (domain) removed from the lifeworld and inhabited by specialists and their 'fellow travelers.'

These two examples of specialist coding make clear that experience coding is not about structural complexity. The second example is certainly far more syntactic complex and technical than the first, but they are both specialist coding in terms of experience coding. These examples also make clear that different forms of coding make use of genres like conversation and explanation (which often involve different degrees of structural complexity in their structural coding) in different ways for different purposes. Everyday conversation and chats in specialist worlds can be different due to the fact that conversation in specialist worlds must follow the norms of the specialist world and not just (or even at times any of) the norms of the lifeworld.

People's individual and public identities interact and so do these two identities and specialist and institutional identities (Gee, 2004). As families socialize their children into their individual identities, they often want to ensure these children will also be well-prepared for later entrance and 'success' in certain public, institutional or specialist identities. So, some families use early family-based (individual, personal, private) socialization to prepare their children for 'success' in certain sorts of institutions, whether these be schools of certain sorts, different religions, or professions or special interests of various sorts.

Institutional Identities

Institutional identities (like doctor and patient, teacher and student, salesperson and customer, and many more) are not in the lifeworld either, but they are very often poised as meditators between the lifeworld and authorized expert identities. A college teacher of physics teaching undergraduates is an institutional actor maintaining rules and regulations that lead to grades, credits, majors, certificates and

Uncorrected Proof

graduation. At the same time, the college professor is an authorized expert who has the 'right' to speak symmetrically to other such experts. So, in the classroom, the college professor speaks as an institutional actor who also has ties to an authorized expert (specialist) identity that allows him to have the power in the institution he has, a power the student as institutional actor does not have.

Institutional worlds also overlay a new order on the lifeworld. They subordinate and regiment the lifeworld (say, of the college undergraduates) with institutional rules and regulations and necessary allegiance to attenuated forms of expert language and knowledge shaped by the institution (here, college undergraduate education).

When I go to the DMV (Division of Motor Vehicles) to renew my license, I come as a 'client' to deal with a clerk who has the responsibility to enforce the rules and regulations of the institution. The clerk, unlike the college professor, is not herself an authorized expert but she defers to authorized experts (like lawyers and high-level administrators) when need be, and this deferral gives her 'power' as an institutional actor that I, the client, do not have in my role as an institutional actor here.

Schools are an interesting example here. Teachers are institutional actors enforcing and maintaining institutional rules that students as institutional actors must follow. But are they like college professors whose identity as an authorized expert underwrites their power in the institution? Or, are they like clerks whose deferral to authorized experts gives them what power they have? In many US schools, the situation is more like clerks than professors.

Linguistic Repertoires and Communication Repertoires

What does experience coding have to do with linguistics and language variation? It has taken us a long while to get to this question, the point of the chapter. Knowing a person speaks Spanish or Farsi tells us very little about how this person produces and comprehends meaning in communication and interaction. All languages have many dialects, registers, styles and other sorts of variations, things which tell us more about a person as a social being than does the name of their language. Furthermore, the difference between a 'dialect' and a 'language' is largely a political distinction, not a linguistic one. There is no reason beyond politics and convention to see Dutch and German as separate languages and not dialects, and all the Romance languages as 'dialects' of Latin.

If we are interested in language variation we are better off using a notion like 'linguistic repertoire' (LR for short) for the full set of linguistic resources (sounds, phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases, sentence structures and discourse features from whatever languages, dialects or registers) a given person has available to them for production,

Uncorrected Proof

comprehension or both. However, one's LR is always part of a larger 'communication repertoire' (CR for short), the entire set of linguistic and non-linguistic resources a given person has available to them for producing and comprehending meaning. Sociolinguistics ought to be about how people put LR and CR resources to use.

Experience coding is the starting point of all linguistic and communicational variation. If we do not know *who* we are when we speak and *who* we wish to address, in terms of situated socially significant identities, we cannot make choices about how to use our linguistic repertoire. We would be at a 'loss for words' because we would not know from where and to where we are to direct meaning in social space.

Language Complexity

I said above that the familiar realm and the public realm together constitute our 'lifeworld.' Our lifeworld is made up of the times and places where we formulate information in ways where 'everyday' (common) shared experiences – those we assume 'people like us' have had – directly inform the meanings of what we say. In our lifeworld, we rely on 'common sense,' the shared knowledge of 'everyday people' communicating and acting as such and not as experts or specialists of any sort. We can distinguish familiar common sense in the private/personal realm and public common sense in the public realm, if we like. Obviously familiar common sense and public common sense interact and influence each other.

For example, consider a mother speaking to her child, who is mimicking her and saying any of the following:

(1) Stop it.
(2) Stop copying me, it's irritating.
(3) Copying people is rude and makes them unhappy.
(4) People who copy others and think it's funny can easily lose their friends.

Note, the point here is not about the complexity of the language used but how it relates to experiences in her familiar realm, the realm which she shares with her kin, intimates, friends, family and those with whom she has or wants solidarity and low social distance. Each of the mother's remarks above assumes shared direct access to experiences, norms, and forms of familiar common sense (or are trying to teach these), though each one is at a different level of complexity grammatically. The ways in which people use their CRs to encode meanings in their lifeworld, we can call 'lifeworld coding' and we can distinguish 'familiar lifeworld coding' from 'public lifeworld coding' when and if necessary.

Uncorrected proof

Implications and Conclusions

Experience coding is essentially about making meaning with reference to an experiential base centered in a specific social domain. It recruits linguistic resources to do this job, resources that allow for enactment of socially situated, societally important identities. The notion of experience coding, though rarely discussed in linguistics, is crucial to language variation and issues of language and power.

A person cannot engage in experience coding successfully if he or she has not had relevant experiences in a given realm of experience and has no shared knowledge with people in that domain (Taylor, 1996). This is not an issue of grammar or how complex your language is. It's an issue of access. This access issue is a crucial source of linguistic inequality leading to economic and social inequality. Students who are not adept at coding institutional meanings for school as an institution – or who refuse to do it – are in danger of failure at school. This is why some families 'practice school' (an institutional identity) at home (the space of familiar identities).

Linguistic variation, such as codeswitching, register variation, dialects, stance taking, multilingualism, and 'translanguaging' of all forms happens within the larger frame of experience coding. Ignoring such coding, or treating issues of power and status with no reference to such coding, impoverishes our work on linguistic variation. Linguists, of course, tend to focus on language (and, in particular, on grammar). However, language exists for meaning-making and meaning-making is situated in contexts of use, the highest levels of which are experiential identities (and there are many sub-identities within each larger realm we have distinguished). Such identities reflect the workings and transformations of society across history.

All humans, barring serious disorders, speak many different social languages (based on experience coding) that enact different socially significant identities. There are no monolinguals from an experience coding perspective. Linguists often use the term 'codeswitching' when they mean switching between the grammars of different languages or dialects. This would better be called 'grammar switching.' Having more than one language can give a person more linguistic resources for experience coding as long as the person has had the necessary experiences. People who have had little experience can still talk, but they cannot experience as widely as people who have had a great many socially diverse experiences.

Experience codes can be codeswitched, too.

Consider the sentences below:

(1) Hornworms sure vary a lot in how well they grow.
(2) Hornworm growth exhibits a significant amount of variation.
(3) Boy, Hornworm growth sure exhibits a significant amount of variation.

Uncorrected Proof

All three of these sentences use grammatical structures that exist in any and all dialects of English (e.g. nouns, nominalizations, adverbs expressing affect). What makes them distinctive is how they pattern together or combine different grammatical resources. This is just like the way wearing a tie atop a tee shirt and shorts says something quite different than wearing it atop a formal shirt and pants. And, too, leaving the tie over the formal shirt and pants says something else about you and your context (and how you want the context read).

Sentence 1 is experience coding based on everyday lifeworld experiences. It signals that the speaker is basing her claim on her own experiences, not as an expert but as an individual with their own experiences with hornworms. Sentence 2 is experience coding based on specialist knowledge. It signals that the speaker is basing her claim on knowledge that resides in a specialist group that in a sense owns and operates that knowledge. Sentence 3 is 'codeswitching' in terms of experience coding. It mixes lifeworld and specialist coding.

A Note on Basil Bernstein

The notion of experience coding I take partially from the British sociologist Basil Bernstein (who did not, however, use the term) and this is a vexed issue. Basil Bernstein studied the sociology of knowledge and its implications for society and schools. See his 2000 book for, in my opinion, the best explication he gave of his theory, a theory which he developed and redeveloped over many years. However, his work became quite controversial when the sociolinguist William Labov castigated Bernstein's distinction between 'restricted codes' and 'elaborated codes' as a racist-tinged delineation of dialects (an attack that Bernstein did not answer until 1997 (Bernstein, 1997).

Labov (1969) took Bernstein to be talking about something like the difference between Black Vernacular English ('non-standard English'), which Labov himself studied, and so-called 'standard English.' He took the term 'restricted' as applied to non-standard dialects as invidious and he correctly pointed out that such dialects were not limited in comparison to standard dialects, which often were, he argued, simply more pointlessly verbose. After Labov's criticism, Bernstein's work was ignored – if not denigrated – in the United States for decades, recouping some US readers only towards the end of his life.

Bernstein was not talking about dialects, but he was linguistically naïve enough to seem at times as if he were. He was talking about coding. His choice of terms ('restricted' and 'elaborated') was unfortunate and he was not always very clear about what he meant by codes, partly because he was no linguist.

In this chapter, I am redoing Bernstein's ideas about codes. The theory I develop is one I think that, in part, Bernstein might have agreed with.

Uncorrected Proof

However, if he would not have, then his legacy, like that of so many other important authors, will have to put up with creative misinterpretation. Most of the terms I use here are not found in Bernstein's work. In my view, what led Bernstein to being attacked by Labov was Bernstein's confusion over the notions of experience coding and structural complexity.

Note that a person who has not experienced much cultural diversity in a pluralist society cannot experience code about diversity and prejudice in the same shared 'insider' way that a person of color might be able to and so is, in this regard, impoverished. A person who has had no experience of or with academics cannot experience code as a specialist academic and may or may not be impoverished depending on what one thinks about different academic disciplines. Academics often have to talk about racial prejudice in an academic ('elaborated') way because they have no personal or community experience with it. They have to talk as an 'outsider.'

References

Bernstein, B. (1997) Sociolinguistics: A personal view. In C. Paulston and R. Tucker (eds) *The Early Days of Sociolinguistics: Memories and Reflections* (pp. 43–52). Austin, TX: Summer Institute of Linguistics, Inc.

Bernstein, B. (2000) *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique* (revised edn). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Gee, J.P. (1990) *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses* (5th edn, 2015). London: Falmer Press.

Gee, J.P. (1999) *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method* (4th edn, 2014). London: Routledge.

Gee, J.P. (2004) *Situated Learning and Language: A Critique of Traditional Schooling*. London: Routledge.

Gee, J.P. (2017) *Teaching, Learning, Literacy in Our High-risk High-tech World: A Framework for Becoming Human*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Habermas, J. (1984) *Theory of Communicative Action. Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Trans. by T. McCarthy. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Hacking, I. (1986) Making up people. In T.C. Heller, M. Sosna and D.E. Wellbery, with A.I. Davidson, A. Swidler, and I. Watt (eds) *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought* (pp. 222–236). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Hacking, I. (2006) Making up people. *The London Review of Books* 28 (16), 23–26.

Kochman, T. (1981) *Black and White Styles in Conflict*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Labov, W. (1969) The logic of non-standard English. In J. Alatis (ed.) *Georgetown Monographs on Languages and Linguistics 22* (pp. 1–440). Washington, DC: Georgetown University School of Languages and Linguistics.

Tannen, D. (1984) *Conversational Style: Analyz*ing Talk Among Friends (new edn, 2005). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Taylor, D. (1996) Toxic Literacies: Exposing the Injustice of Bureaucratic Texts. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Uncorrected Proof